

# Human Rights & Human Welfare

---

Volume 5 | Issue 1

Article 53

---

2005

## Human Rights and the War on Terror: Sudan

Alexandra Nichols

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw>



Part of the [Human Rights Law Commons](#), [International Law Commons](#), [International Relations Commons](#), [Near and Middle Eastern Studies Commons](#), [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#), and the [Terrorism Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Nichols, Alexandra (2005) "Human Rights and the War on Terror: Sudan," *Human Rights & Human Welfare*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 1 , Article 53.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw/vol5/iss1/53>

This Topical Research Digest is brought to you for free and open access by the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Human Rights & Human Welfare by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact [jennifer.cox@du.edu](mailto:jennifer.cox@du.edu), [dig-commons@du.edu](mailto:dig-commons@du.edu).

## **Sudan<sup>1</sup>**

by Alexandra Nichols

Since independence Sudan has found itself almost constantly embroiled in civil conflict within its own borders. Throughout the 1990's, Sudan was widely known to sponsor terrorism, having such as including Osama bin Laden from 1991-1996. American sanctions have been in place in Sudan since 1997, the last American ambassador was removed in 1998, and Sudan has been on the U.S. State Departments list of sponsored terrorists since 1993.

Potentially, facing a military threat by the United States following September 11th , Sudan for the first time opened talks with the United States on counter-terrorism. Since Sudan began to provide intelligence to the U.S. on Al Qaeda and cut ties with outside terrorist groups, a rapprochement between Sudan and the U.S. has begun. In May 2004 Sudan was removed from the U.S. list of countries deemed as uncooperative in the war against terrorist networks. While the decision was made to remove Sudan from this list it should be noted that this action does not remove Sudan from the State Department's list of terrorist sponsors.

Although Sudan is making efforts to help the U.S. fight the "War on Terror", within its own borders a dictatorship is waging war on its own citizens, making a strong alliance in the war against terror with the United States difficult. Though Sudan has helped search for Al Qaeda operatives, many argue that the civil unrest and terror campaigns carried out on its own citizens are leading to instability that could in fact have grave impacts for citizens of other states.

In hopes of fostering a diplomatic relationship with Sudan and of forging forward with the "War on Terror", American officials have played a key role in brokering peace talks in the ongoing civil war. However, while peace appeared to be within reach for Southern Sudan, the Darfur region of Western Sudan deteriorated into war. All of this has halted progress made in the South, resulting in massive human rights violations and deeper political destabilization.

## **Background**

This section provides comprehensive introductory background information on Sudan , focusing on the disintegration of the country into civil war, along with information on the numerous and complex forces involved in the ongoing conflicts. Historical, political, economic and social factors are taken into account while considering Sudan 's connections to international terrorists and the changing relationship between Sudan and the United States in the aftermath of September 11 . This section provides background information for the reader who may be unfamiliar with Sudanese history to better understand the context of the conflicts and debates.

---

<sup>1</sup> This section has a supplement that begins on page S-39.

P. M. Holt and M. W. Daly. 2000. *A History of the Sudan: From the Coming of Islam to the Present Day*: 5th. Edition. London and New York: Longman.

*ABSTRACT: Provides a very good introductory history the disintegration of Sudan into brutal civil war and the attempts to establish an Islamist state under a new military regime. Describes the making of modern Sudan over the last 150 years and offers a clear, readable and succinct introduction to an area that is seldom out of the world's headlines.*

Yusuf Fadl and Richard Gray Hasan. 2002. *Religion and Conflict in Sudan*. Nairobi: Paulines Productions Africa.

A collection of papers presented at an international conference at Yale discussing the influence of religion, modernity and globalisation on the war in Sudan.

Douglas Johnson. 2003. *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

A well-balanced account of the numerous and complex forces involved in Sudan's ongoing conflicts. Examines historical, political, economic, and social factors of the trajectory of Sudan's civil wars. Focuses on the differences between Sudan's first civil war in the 1960s, the current war, and the minor conflicts generated by and contained within the larger wars. Considers regional and international factors, such as humanitarian aid, oil revenue, and terrorist organizations, as underlying issues that have exacerbated the violence. Edited from various sources

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Richard Lobban. 2001. "The Sudan since 1989: National Islamic Front Rule. (Cover Story)". 23(2): 1-9.

Provides essential background information on the political conditions in Sudan from 1989 to 2001. Includes such topics as the Coup d'état in 1989, the human rights crises, resumption of the civil war in 1983 and the conflict between General Umar al-Bashir and Muslim Brother leader Hasan al-Turabi.

Donald Petterson. 2003. *Inside Sudan: Political Islam, Conflict and Catastrophe*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Petterson, the last American ambassador to complete an assignment in Sudan, provides insight into the events transpiring from 1998 to the present. Petterson explores the experiences of Americans in Khartoum after Washington put Sudan on the black list of state sponsors of terrorism and considers Sudan's connections to international terrorists, while assessing the changes in the relationship between Sudan and the United States after 9/11. Provides appropriate background information for someone unfamiliar with Sudanese history to understand the context of conflicts and debates.

## **The Darfur Crisis**

Recently the focus on Sudan has narrowed to terrorism within its own borders and primarily on the recent escalating crises in the Darfur region. This section provides extensive information on the events leading up to the crises and the role of the Sudanese government and various factions

involved in the crises. Attention is also given to the lack of involvement from the international community, as well as the socio-economic backdrop of the Darfur conflict and the political and ethnic divisions.

2004. "Darfur's Turning Point". *Africa Confidential*. 45(17): <http://www.africa-confidential.com/index.aspx?pageid=21>.

Provides a brief overview of the varying factions involved in the current Darfur crises. From the SLA (Sudanese Liberation Army) and JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) to the "Janjaweed" and government forces. Discusses the socio-economic backdrop to the Darfur conflict as well as the ethnic and political divisions.

2004. "The Darfur Emergency: Current Conflict and International Response". *International Debates*. 2(6): 166-9.

Provides information on the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Darfur Province in western Sudan, as of September 2004. Focuses on the significance of ethnic discrimination to the emergence of the crisis in February 2003, as well as the role of resource constraints in fueling the conflict. Provides background information on a ceasefire agreement between the government of Sudan and rebel groups, including the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA).

2004. "Spinning on the Edge". *Africa Confidential*. 45(19): 1-3.

A brief analysis discussing the possible scenarios of if the NIF (National Islamic Front), the Sudanese government, were to fall. Brings into light the dilemma for Washington, as those to some extent involved in and responsible for Darfur are in fact helpful in the Khartoum "Security Operation".

2004. "Sudan and Its New Weapons of War ". *The Lancet*. 364(9432): 390.

Presents an editorial on how war, rape and sexual violence are seen as legitimate weapons in Darfur, Sudan and provides a description of the way in which these crimes obliterate the will of the people. Notes the reluctance of state leaders to move past legal arguments surrounding if Darfur falls into the definition of genocide or not, which has resulted in the suffering of thousand of people.

"How did Darfur Happen?". *The New York Times Magazine*. Available from the Sudan Tribune here: [http://www.sudantribune.com/article.php?id\\_article=6003](http://www.sudantribune.com/article.php?id_article=6003).

A clear and deep analysis of development of the current crises in Darfur dating back to the 1970's and 80's. Excellent resource for those with little knowledge on the current Darfur crises. Clearly lays out the differences between the SPLA movement in Southern Sudan and the SLA movement in the Darfur region as well the extent of government involvement in both conflicts. Discusses the extent of American involvement and the issues surrounding the use of the "genocide" label.

Warren Hogue. 2004. "Annan Says Sudan Hasn't Curbed Militias, Urges More Monitors." *New York Times*. (A)5.

Focuses Sudan's failure to keep commitments to rein in militias terrorizing the Darfur region. Identifies the importance of deploying an international force in the region and discusses the absence of steps taken to bring justice of the militias.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. Darfur Destroyed - Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militias Forces in Western Sudan. HRW Index No. : A1606. <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/sudan0504/>.

Documents how Sudanese Government forces have overseen and directly participated in massacres, summary executions of civilians, burnings of towns and villages, and the forcible depopulation of Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa land. The report also documents how Janjaweed Arab militias have destroyed mosques, killed Muslim religious leaders and desecrated Korans belonging to their enemies.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. Empty Promises? Continuing Abuses in Darfur, Sudan. [http://hrw.org/doc/?t=pubs&document\\_limit=20,20](http://hrw.org/doc/?t=pubs&document_limit=20,20).

Documents and analyzes how the Sudanese armed forces and the government-backed Janjaweed militias continue to target civilians and their livestock in villages in rural areas and in the towns and camps under government control. The report also analyzes Sudanese government pledges to rein in the militias, end impunity and restore security in Darfur.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. UN: Darfur Resolution a Historic Failure. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/09/18/darfur9355.htm>.

A brief critique by Human Rights Watch of the U.N. Security Council's sanctions on the Sudanese government. It argues that the failure of the Security Council to impose an oil embargo on Sudan's government is in fact enabling the atrocities to continue, ensuring that the government continues to have the resources necessary to carry out its mass murder campaign.

Ulrich Mans. 2004. "Briefing: Sudan: The New War in Darfur". *African Affairs*. 103(17): 291.

Discusses the two main anti-government groupings in the Darfur region of Sudan. The SLA (Sudanese Liberation Army) and the JEM (Justice Equality Movement) and their reasoning for rising up against the Sudanese government in Khartoum.

Samantha Power. 2004. "Dying in Darfur". The New Yorker. [http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040830fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040830fa_fact1).

An in depth and informative article focusing on the events leading up to the current situation in Darfur as well as U.S. involvement in Sudan over the years. Demonstrates the extensive impact and atrocities committed on refugees and internally displaced people in the Darfur region while highlighting the extent to which the current situation is deeply rooted and extremely complicated. Brings into question if there can actually be an end to the ethnic cleansing currently taking place.

Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army. [www.splmtoday.com/](http://www.splmtoday.com/)

The official website of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army. Provides extensive information on various issues and points of view as well as information on the vision and

objectives of the SPLM. Offers historical background on the conflict as well as the peace initiatives put forth. A fairly extensive website with a variety of information.

## Human Rights Abuses in Sudan

Human rights abuses in Sudan have been ongoing for years and widely acknowledged by various human rights organizations, academics and governments. This section provides an overview of the various human rights abuses in Sudan . Attention is on the role that oil has played in causing abuses as well as those human rights violations perpetrated by the SPLA and more recently by the *Janjaweed*. Also covered here is the role of the Sudanese government forces in recent massacres, summary execution of civilians, and the burning of towns and villages.

César Chelala. 2002. "Sudan: A War against the People". *The Lancet*. 359

Focuses on the role that resources, primarily oil, have played in the now two decade long Sudanese conflict. Details human rights abuses and the forced displacement of Dinka tribe members, as well as the deteriorating health situation. The article ultimately argues that economic aid to Sudan should be contingent on ceasing civilian attacks and unrestricted mobility for humanitarian agencies and human right monitors.

European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council. 2000. The Clinton Administration, War Criminals and Sudan. European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council. <http://www.espac.org/pdf/The%20Clinton%20Admin,%20War%20Criminals%20etc.pdf>.

Documents human rights abuses by the SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) through eyewitness reports. Also discusses American assistance to the SPLA and the controversies surrounding the American government's involvement in providing direct food aid to the SPLA.

The European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council. 2000. The Displacement of Truth: Amnesty International, Oil and Sudan. [http://www.espac.org/oil\\_pages/amnesty\\_oil\\_sudan.html](http://www.espac.org/oil_pages/amnesty_oil_sudan.html).

A critique of Amnesty International's article "Sudan: The Human Price of Oil". Its principal contention is that Amnesty only considered government involvement in the war, and not militia groups like the SPLA. It also takes issue with the methodology of the Amnesty report.

Editorial. 2004. "Sudan and Its New Weapons of War ". *The Lancet*. 364(9432): 390.

An editorial on how war, rape and sexual violence are seen as legitimate weapons in Darfur, and provides a description of the way in which these crimes obliterate the will of the people. Notes the reluctance of leaders to move past legal arguments over whether the crisis in Darfur fits the definition of genocide or not.

Abdelwahab El-Affendi. 2001. "Islam and Human Rights: The Lessons from Sudan." *Muslim World*. 91(3/4): 481-506.

An in depth analysis of human rights abuses in Sudan highlighting the controversy over the contrast of human rights and Islamic norms. Presents the underlying causes, its ideological justification and explores possible remedies.

Amnesty International. 2000. Sudan: The Human Price of Oil. AI INDEX: AFR 54/01/00 ERR. [http://www.woek.de/pdf/sudan\\_ai\\_the%20human%20price%20of%20oil\\_may\\_2000.pdf](http://www.woek.de/pdf/sudan_ai_the%20human%20price%20of%20oil_may_2000.pdf).

Explores the link between the human rights violations committed by the government forces and its allied militias and the oil operations by foreign companies. Argues that the companies involved have a responsibility to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights wherever they operate. Calls on the Sudanese government, the SLA and the international community to condemn human rights violations and confirm their commitment to various articles in the Geneva Convention.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. Darfur Destroyed - Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militias Forces in Western Sudan. HRW Index No. : A1606. <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/sudan0504/>.

Documents how Sudanese Government forces have overseen and directly participated in massacres, summary executions of civilians, burnings of towns and villages, and the forcible depopulation of Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa land. The report also documents how Janjaweed Arab militias have destroyed mosques, killed Muslim religious leaders and desecrated Korans belonging to their enemies. (Abridged from the website. )

Human Rights Watch. 2004. Empty Promises? Continuing Abuses in Darfur, Sudan. [http://hrw.org/doc/?t=pubs&document\\_limit=20,20](http://hrw.org/doc/?t=pubs&document_limit=20,20).

Documents and analyzes how the Sudanese armed forces and the government-backed Janjaweed militias continue to target civilians and their livestock in rural villages and towns and camps under government control. The report also analyzes Sudanese government pledges to rein in the militias, end impunity and restore security in Darfur.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. Sudan, Oil and Human Rights. HRW Index No. : 1564322912. [http://hrw.org/doc/?t=africa\\_pub&c=sudan](http://hrw.org/doc/?t=africa_pub&c=sudan).

Investigates the role that oil has played in Sudan's civil war. A very comprehensive examination of the links between natural-resource exploitation and human rights abuses. The report provides evidence of the complicity of oil companies in the human rights abuses as well as the SPLA's role in the struggle over oil fields. In addition to its regular army, the government has deployed militant Islamist militias to prosecute the war, and has armed southern factions in a policy of ethnic manipulation and destabilization.

## **Terrorism and Sudan**

Attention to international terrorism and Sudan was extensive throughout the 1990's. However, since the September 11 attacks on the United States , attention has shifted to what U.S. President Bush coined the "Axis of Evil", Iran , Iraq and North Korea . Sudan has taken steps to cut off ties with external terrorist networks; according to the U.S. State Department Sudan has arrested some

thirty suspected terrorists. While this has resulted in a rapprochement between the U.S. and Sudan, it is apparent that Sudan has been unable to quell the ongoing conflict and escalating terrorism within its own borders. An unfortunate effect of such instability is often terrorists with cross-border objectives.

This section provides information on aspects of terrorism in Sudan such as a Sudan's role in harboring terrorists and supporting terrorism throughout the 1990's; a brief account of the opportunities that were missed to gain information on Osama bin Laden in the years leading up to the September 11, 2001 attacks; Sudan's recent cooperation with the U.S. in fighting the "War Against Terror"; and the changing relationship between Sudan and the United States post 9/11.

---

2004. "Spinning on the Edge". *Africa Confidential*. 45(19):

A brief analysis discussing the possible outcomes of a collapse of the Sudanese state. Brings into light the dilemma for the United States as a country with some level of historical involvement in the current crises in Darfur.

Hassan Al-Turabi. 2002. "America Will Not Tolerate Islamic Movements, Even If They Are Peaceful". *New Perspectives Quarterly*. 19(2): 59.

An interview with Hassan al-Turabi, the Islamic spiritual leader of Sudan who hosted terrorist Osama bin Laden before he left for Afghanistan. Also includes his view about the impact of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. and on Islamic movements. Provides a description of his relationship with Osama bin Laden and the United States.

Edgar O'Ballance. 2000. *Sudan, Civil War and Terrorism, 1956-99*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Macmillan Press; St. Martin's Press.

O'Ballance brings us from the 16-year civil war beginning soon after independence through a second southern revolution breaking out in 1983 and up to Sudan's extensive involvement in terrorism in the mid 1990's. Exemplifies the central governments consisting of mainly military dictatorships, plagued by plots, and ongoing quarrels with adjacent countries.

Donald Petterson. 2003. *Inside Sudan: Political Islam, Conflict and Catastrophe*. Westview Press.

Petterson, the last American ambassador to complete an assignment in Sudan provides insight into the events in Sudan from 1998 to the present. Petterson explores experiences of Americans in Khartoum after Washington put Sudan on the black list of state sponsors of terrorism and considers Sudan's connections to international terrorists, while assessing the changes in the relationship between Sudan and the United States after 9/11. Provides sufficient background information for someone unfamiliar with Sudanese history to understand the context of conflicts and debates.

Linda Robinson. 2002. "A Timeworn Terrorism List". *U.S. News and World Report*. 132(17):

Focuses on the annual U.S. list of states that sponsor terrorism, which is accompanied by a report, 'Patterns of Global Terrorism.' Argues against the rigidity of the list by suggesting a clearer distinction between current sponsors and past supporters of terrorism. Argues both that



Sudan should not be on the list and which other countries should be. Suggests gradating the list to allow more flexibility in setting penalties.

Yehudit Ronen. 2002. "Sudan and the United States: Is a Decade of Tension Winding Down?" *Middle East Policy*. 9(1):

Focuses on a study that examined the relationship between Sudan and the U.S. and analyzed the roots and development of the bilateral dispute which began in 1990. Discusses the designation of Sudan as a sponsor of terrorism by the United States. Explores the effect of the bombings of U.S. Embassy buildings in Kenya and Tanzania on the US-Sudan relationship and actions taken for the reconciliation of the two countries.

David Rose. 2001. Resentful West Spurned Sudan's Key Terror Files. *The Observer*. Date. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/waronterrorism/story/0,1373,560675,00.html>.

A brief account of the ways in which security chiefs on both sides of the Atlantic repeatedly turned down opportunities from the Sudanese government to acquire an intelligence database on Osama bin Laden and more than 200 leading members of his al-Qaeda terrorist network in the years leading up to the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Robert Rotberg. 2002. "Failed States in a World of Terror". *Foreign Affairs*. 81(4):

Discusses the immediacy and importance of addressing the problem of failed nation-states in the wake of September 11, 2001. Argues that failed states are incapable of projecting power and asserting authority within their own borders, leaving their territories governmentally empty. The instability that these countries harbor not only threatens the lives and livelihoods of their own people but also endangers world peace.

Michael Rubin. 2001. Don't 'Engage' Rogue Regimes. *Wall Street Journal*.

Discusses the importance of the United States' decision to engage rather than confront Sudan following the September 11 attacks. Argues that Washington should not engage or negotiate with rogue regimes as Sudan does not appear to have changed much of its behavior as terror campaigns are continuously carried out upon Sudanese citizens.

Michael Rubin. 2001. In the War against Terror, Where Goes Sudan? *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy #570.

With attention focused on the bombings against Afghanistan, the most radical change in U.S. policy toward any other Muslim state since September 11 has been the accelerated rapprochement between the United States and Sudan, a country that hosted Osama bin Laden between 1991 and 1996. Rubin raises the question as to if Sudan has in fact changed its behavior since Sept. 11, 2001. While the State Department has said that since September 11, Khartoum has arrested some thirty suspected terrorists Rubin argues that only a demonstrable pattern of sustained behavioral change should merit rehabilitation of a government that has been so deeply involved with terror for so many years.

Shaul Shay. 2005. *Red Sea Terror Triangle: Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Islamic Terror*. Transaction Publishers.

In the aftermath of 9/11 the United States declared a war on terror. The Bush administration focused its efforts on what they called the “axis of evil” (Iran, Iraq, and N. Korea). There is however a triangle of countries in the Red Sea region that are also potential targets in the war against terror - Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. Shay examines the three countries designated as the Red Sea Terror Triangle, and explores the ties each maintains with Islamic terror, as well as the reciprocal links between them.

Peter Stone. 2001. “Sudan Shifts Its Sands toward Washington”. *National Journal*. 33(43):

Discusses the role of Sudan in the coalition assembled by the United States to fight the terrorist network run by Osama bin Laden. Discusses gestures of support from Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir and the decision of Sudanese banks to provide financial information to U.S. government agencies. Exemplifies the willingness of Sudan to help in the search for bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network.

United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on African Affairs. 1997. Sudan and Terrorism: Hearing before the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations. Washington: U.S. G. P. O. : For sale by the U.S. G. P. O. Supt. of Docs. Congressional Sales Office.

Senate hearing detailing Sudanese involvement in harboring terrorists and promoting terrorism through the early to mid 1990’s, as well as responsive actions taken by the U.S. government. Provides testimonies as well as a statement of the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan Regarding Sudan and terrorism.